

*Rev. A. A. Boston*

THE

# SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

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# PROSPECTUS OF THE SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETER.

NEW SERIES.

E. R. BROADERS, PUBLISHER,  
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The present number commences a new volume of this Periodical. The purpose of the work and the character of its contents will be the same as heretofore. There will be no connexion with this and the preceding volumes except that the Translations and Expositions will be continued in regular order.

The object of this Publication will be to afford to Sunday School Teachers and Parents, and also to other Christians, facilities towards a right understanding and use of the Bible, and particularly of the New Testament. It will contain translations of different passages and of whole books of the New Testament, with expositions and such critical and practical remarks as may be thought useful. It will also offer to the reader short essays on the nature of the scriptural writings, their literary character, critical peculiarities, historical, biographical, and ecclesiastical uses and value. The work is not designed to be controversial nor deeply critical. Notices of valuable books upon biblical literature, and translations and extracts from the works of eminent writers will occasionally form a part of the contents.

It will continue to be edited by some of the members of the Theological School in Cambridge, assisted by the contributions of several distinguished clergymen. Every exertion will be used to secure an interest to the work, and likewise to provide for its regular and punctual publication.

A large addition to the subscription list is still necessary to defray the cost of the publication, and it is hoped that those who approve of the plan will lend their assistance. Clergymen and others are respectfully requested to endeavor as far as their convenience will permit to increase its circulation.

## CONDITIONS.

I. The Scriptural Interpreter will be published on the 15th of every month.

II. Each number will contain 48 pages 12mo., handsomely printed on good paper and type, making two volumes a year of 288 pages each.

III. Price two dollars per annum, to be paid in advance.

IV. Any persons procuring five subscribers shall be entitled to a sixth copy gratis.

## TRANSLATION AND EXPOSITION.

## MATTHEW XVIII. 1—20.

*The Disciples Rebuked—Forgiveness of Injuries.*

1 At that time the disciples of Jesus came to him  
2 saying; Who then shall be greatest in the kingdom  
3 of heaven? And Jesus calling unto him a child,  
placed him in the midst of them and said; verily I  
say unto you, except ye be changed in disposition  
and become as children, ye shall not enter into the  
4 kingdom of heaven. Whosoever then shall humble  
himself like this child, he shall be greatest in the  
5 kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive  
one such a child in my name, receiveth me; but  
6 whosoever shall cause injury to one of these little  
ones who believe on me, it were better for him that  
an upper mill stone should be hung upon his neck,  
and that he should be drowned in the depths of the  
7 sea. Woe to the world because of offences. Of-  
fences indeed must come, but woe to that man by  
8 whom the offence comes. But if thy hand or thy  
foot cause thee to offend, cut them off and cast them  
from thee; it is better for thee to enter lame or  
maimed into life, than having two hands or two feet  
9 to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if thine  
eye cause thee to offend, pluck it out and cast it  
from thee; it is better for thee with one eye to enter

into life, than having two eyes to be cast into the  
10 hell of fire. Take heed that ye despise not one of  
these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven  
their angels do look upon the face of my Father  
11 which is in heaven. For the Son of man has come  
to save the lost.

12 How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep,  
and one of them has gone astray, doth he not leave  
the ninety and nine upon the mountains, and go to  
13 seek that which is gone astray? And if it be that  
he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more  
over it, than over the ninety and nine which went  
14 not astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Fa-  
ther who is in heaven, that one of these little ones  
should perish.

15 But if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go,  
convince him of his fault between thee and him  
alone. If he shall attend to thee, thou hast gained  
16 thy brother, but if he shall not attend, take with  
thee one or two more, that by the mouth of two or  
three witnesses every word may be established.  
17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the  
assembly, but if he shall neglect to hear the assem-  
bly, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a  
18 publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye  
shall bind upon the earth, shall be bound in heaven,  
and whatsoever ye shall loose upon the earth, shall



19 be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them 20 of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Parallel passages are Mark ix. 33—Luke ix. 46.

Jesus was now in a house at Capernaum. As he was on his way thither with his disciples, they had been interrupted by the tax-gatherers. Whilst Jesus was talking with Peter about the tribute, and whilst that Apostle had gone to obtain the means of paying it, the dispute had been agitated among the remaining eleven. We are not told that the following conversation of Jesus was held in presence of the twelve only.

1. *At that time.* This does not necessarily fix the precise moment of the conversation, but connects it with the previous occurrences.

*The disciples came saying.* Mark says that Jesus asked them; and Luke, that he perceived what was the subject of their dispute. These apparently incongruous statements which the simplest ingenuity will at once account for and reconcile, are of infinite value as proving the individual authority and sincerity of each writer.

*Greatest, literally who is greater:* the present tense as in Hebrew usage, for the future; the comparative degree has often the force of the superlative. As in Matth. xiii. 32, 'the mustard seed which is,' literally—the lesser of all seeds—rightly rendered 'the least.' 1 Cor. xv. 19, 'of all men more miserable'—properly—*most* miserable.

*In the kingdom of heaven.* The cause of this discussion among the disciples may be discovered by looking back

upon past scenes and conversations. Jesus had lately been talking with his disciples upon his coming death and resurrection; the latter event was in their opinion to lead to his glorious assumption of his kingdom—a kingdom not of righteousness chiefly—but of wide temporal dominion, and of princely splendor. It thus became a matter of interest to the disciples which of them should sit at the right hand of the Monarch. Their inquiries upon this subject were peculiarly earnest at this time, as their Master by his apparent partiality in selecting three of them to witness the Transfiguration, and by his previous approbation of Peter, had, as they thought, already chosen his favorites. It is plain from the context that they as yet knew nothing of the true nature of Christ's kingdom. Their hearts were still filled with the ambitious hopes of a temporal dominion.

2. *Calling unto him a child.* This act was in conformity with the usual manner of the Savior, and with the common oriental usage, of illustrating spiritual doctrine by corporeal images. The pride of his hearers would be rebuked by this simple and winning object. It has not escaped the notice of critics, that as the object of the Savior's approbation was *called* to him, he must have been of such an age as to be able to understand and to walk. There is an interesting tradition that this youth was the afterwards celebrated Ignatius.

3. *Except ye be changed.* Rosenmueller says, 'you must put on *again* the disposition of children, as to *reform* from one course and to adopt its *opposite*, is only to *resume* the latter.' As Horace says, '*natural* desires being *changed*, the desire of manhood is for wealth and friendships, and cringes to honors.' The quality primarily intended by the Savior as needed by his disciples, was humility, though there is probably a general reference to the contented, unambitious, unenvying spirit, so beautifully observable in the child, so manifestly wanting in the disciples.

*Kingdom of heaven*, is here used in its high and proper sense.

4. *Shall be greatest*, he shall be the greatest Christian, he shall be most worthy of the name, and highest in my re-

gard. Compare the Savior's description of children with the following by John Calvin. 'Their whole nature is a sort of seed-bed of sin, and therefore they cannot but be odious and abominable in the sight of God.'\*

5. *Shall receive.* This verb has here, as in some other places, a fuller signification. It means—to receive with honor, or affection, or esteem.

*One such a child,* referring not to similarity of age, but of character. The Syriac version reads—'one that is as this child.'

*In my name,* a Hebrew form equivalent to—for my sake, on my account. It is of the same force as the expression Mark ix. 41—'because ye belong to Christ.' Thus our Savior in answering the question of the disciples, first rebuked the spirit in which it was asked, telling them *that unless they changed their feelings* they would have no place, high or low, in his kingdom. He then enlarges upon the ideas thus suggested.

6. *Shall cause injury.* The import of the original word comprehends all the ways and means by which one may injure another, by offending, misleading, tempting to wickedness, or withholding advice or aid, &c. The connection here seems to lie in the extension of the idea of receiving or rejecting one disciple, to that of the future progress of the faith.

*One of these little ones,* one even of the humblest Christians.

*Who believe on me,* i. e. who are my disciples.

*An upper mill-stone.* In a large mill there were two stones; the upper one was generally very large, and being moveable, was turned by asses. The word which I have translated *upper*, refers to this process, and means literally, *the mill-stone of the ass.*

*Should be drowned.* This was not a Jewish mode of punishment; they had four sorts of capital punishment,—burning, stoning, strangling and beheading. It was in use among the Egyptians and Syrians, from whom the Jews adopted the word for a proverbial use. In proof that this punishment was in use in other parts of the East, Bloom-

\* Calvin's Instit. 4. 15. 10.

field cites the travels of F. M. Pinto, who relates that the King of Mattaban, being taken prisoner had a stone tied round his neck and was cast into the sea. Dongtaeus, in his notes on the New Testament, shows that this was considered a very severe punishment. Lactantius (de Mort. Persecut. c. xv.) says that in Diocletian's persecution, some Christians were thus destroyed.

7. *Offences*, circumstances of human agency which oppose the progress of the Gospel, impair its purity, lead to its rejection, or inflict injury upon its friends. The Ethiopic version renders the word by *temptations*.

*Offences—must come*: not that such are predestined by God, but it is to be expected that men will so abuse their liberty as to make it a stumbling block in a brother's way. So long as men continue what they now are, causes of sin and of suffering must necessarily originate through their agency.

*Woe to that man*, for he is responsible for the evil which he causes.

8. 9. Kuinoel supposes that these verses were not spoken by Christ in this connection, but are introduced from chap. v. on the mention of the word *offence*. Matthew appears frequently to conjoin speeches of similar purport uttered at different times. The verses here are certainly parenthetical, for the former subject is resumed at ver. 10. The sentiment inculcated is this. Causes of sin may come from ourselves as well as from others. These however dear must be removed, for whatever pain may attend their severance, it is better that what remains should be in a state of safety and of happiness.

10. *These little ones*. The primary reference of the Savior's injunction is still to the simple and unoffending child, though it undoubtedly contains a fuller application to the regard which is due to the humblest disciple.

*For*, Jesus gives two reasons for his injunction.

*In heaven*. These words, as if unnecessary, are omitted in the Syriac and Persic versions.

*Their angels*. This is a reference to an opinion prevalent among the Jews and common with them to Gentiles, as ap-

pears from Dio Cassius, Plutarch and Horace, relative to guardian angels. The Gentiles seem to have confined them to persons of distinction; among the Jews however it was the general belief that each person had his attendant angel. The Mahometans still retain the opinion. Light-foot notes many opinions relating to the *offices* of these angels, only one of which need be mentioned here. The attendant angel of each individual was considered as his representative, and thus was thought to stand in the same favor with God, as did the person himself. This will guide us to the meaning of the Savior.

‘These my humble and unambitious followers enjoy the perpetual favor and approbation of my Father in heaven, therefore despise them not.’

*Look upon the face.* The popular opinion was, that the angels, the good *genii of great men*, were nearest to God; but Christ says, the humblest Christian is especially cared for by Divine Providence. His words may have one of two senses. Either, in conformity with the opinion just stated—children are in such favor with God, that their angels stand very near his throne, so near indeed that they may look upon his face,—or there may be a reference to the oriental custom by which monarchs are secluded from common view and accessible to those only who are in especial favor. See Luke i. 19. 1 Kings x. 8, and Esther i. 14. ‘The princes which saw the king’s face, and sat the first in the kingdom.’ The Jews called the angel Michael, ‘the first and principal of the chief princes, that behold the face of the king,’\* and Suriel ‘the prince of faces, an angel that is counted worthy to come before the king.’†—In either of these senses the words of Christ have a beautiful meaning, as indicating the regard of God for the sincere disciple however humble he might be. We should not be justified in drawing from the Savior’s words any support to the opinion of the Jews, though the literal interpretation of them may imply it. He made use of common language and ideas as the most forcible aid in conveying his instruction.

\* Jacchiades in Dan. x. 13. † Babylon, Talmud, fol. 51. 1.



11. *For the Son of Man* ; here is a second reason why a disciple should not be despised. *The lost* ; in other connections the phrase *lost sheep*, is used, i. e. 'I am come to seek, to collect together, and to protect, the sheep which have no shepherd, and are wandering from the fold.

12. *How think ye?* The connection between the following and the preceding subject is not at first obvious ; probably it is something like the following. 'You may understand the grief which the Almighty feels when *one* of the disciples is seduced away, by observing the anxiety of the shepherd &c.

*Leave upon the mountains* ; our version represents the shepherd as going into the mountains to seek his sheep ; the reading I have given agrees with that in the ancient versions, and is conformable to the original. The mountains were a frequent pasture for sheep. 2 Chron. xviii. 16, 'all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep.' Ezek. xxxiv. 6. 'My sheep wandered through all the mountains.' Job xl. 20, Psal. cxlvii. 8. So Virgil says, (Eclog. II. 21.) 'A thousand sheep of mine wander upon the mountains.'

15. Some commentators have thought with Kuinoel that a new subject was here commenced, unconnected with the preceding, and have supposed that this is an instance in which Matthew joins together various and distinct discourses of Christ ; Luke (xvii. 3, 4.) introduces these remarks in another connection, and this supposition may therefore be true, but there seems nothing improbable in the idea that the conversation of Jesus should often turn upon similar subjects, as there was so great a similarity in his audiences.

Up to the 14th verse Christ had admonished those who despised others, he now advises those who are themselves despised.

*Thy brother*, i. e. if thy Christian brother injure thee ; all men likewise are brethren. *Go*, do not wait for him to come to thee.

*Convince him* : the noun—'of his fault,' is here to be supplied. Campbell renders, *expostulate with him* ; make

him sensible by kind arguments of the injury he hath done thee.

*If he shall attend*; if he shall listen patiently, take your reproof kindly, and express his sorrow for his offence, &c.

*Thou hast gained*; thou hast recovered him from error, restored him to duty, gained his friendship &c.

16. *If he shall not attend*; if he deny, extenuate or excuse his fault, or brave your reproof, &c.

*One or two more*. Do not even yet noise the matter abroad, but take with thee one or two mutual friends to bear witness both to the offence and to your ineffectual endeavors to obtain redress by private representation.

*By the mouth*, a Hebraism for *the testimony*. This injunction is in conformity with the precept in Deuter. xix. 15.

*Every word*; so that you may have testimony to all the previous steps of your conduct.

17. *To the assembly*; I have used this word in preference to the *church*, because this was an institution which did not then exist. Some understand the original as referring to the multitude before whom it was lawful to reprove, others, to the political tribunal, or Sanhedrim. Lightfoot has shown that it was a common practice among the Jews to refer disputes to a synagogue. This is probably the spirit of the Savior's injunction. Let the religious congregation to which you both belong, judge between you.

*An heathen man &c*; account him a flagitious person and one whose intercourse is to be avoided. The Gentiles and tax-gatherers, were not to be denied the common offices of humanity, but owing to the peculiar situation of the Jews might be denied a near intimacy. There is nothing malicious or revengeful in the Savior's precept; the spirit of it is easily discernible.

18. Jesus now gives to all of his Apostles the powers which he had just before (xvi. 19) given to Peter, viz. to prohibit or permit, to forbid or enjoin whatever was necessary in the establishment of the religion. Wetstein paraphrases the verse thus; 'if any one shall set at nought the sentence so pronounced by you respecting him, he will do it to his own utter condemnation. For if he refuses to be

reconciled to you he will be guilty before God; on the contrary, if he appease you by a reconciliation, he shall obtain pardon for the offence committed against you from God also.'

19. *Anything*; the signification of this word must here be restricted to the circumstances of the case; anything of need in propagating the religion.

20. *Two or three*, i. e. a very few, *in my name*; for the sake of me, or of my religion.

*There am I.* So the Rabbinical writers say—'If two men sit down with the law between them, the Schechinah (divine presence) is with them.'

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#### MEANING OF THE WORD ANGEL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Angels have been the subject of many a bitter controversy, both among the schoolmen and fathers; some declaring them pure spirits, while others asserted, and maintained, that they had material bodies. Some went so far as to declare the number and orders, attributes and duties of these superterrestrial beings. It is not our intention to meddle with these matters, which do not concern us—but merely to attempt an explanation of the word as used in various significations in the scriptures of the New Testament.

*Angel is the name of an office, and not of a substance or nature.* Angels are frequently enough mentioned in the scripture, but no where is any notice given of their birth, residence, or natural history, and since the word is applied to various *things*, as well inanimate as living, we see with unobjectionable clearness, that it means an office and not a person,

We will then consider the various persons and things entrusted with this office, or, in other words, who are called angels.

1. The *general* meaning of angel is *any one who carries a message*, and is then synonymous with *legale deputy*, when used in its sense of messenger. The Greek word meaning angel, indeed, is often rendered messenger, in our version, with the utmost propriety.

John, when in prison, sent his disciples to Jesus to inquire if he were the Christ; they are called *his angels*, Luke vii. 24. When Jesus was approaching to Samaria, he sent some of his disciples before him, to prepare lodgings, they are called *his angels*. John the Baptist is called an *angel*. Math. xi. 10. In these three instances the Greek word signifying *angel* is rendered *messenger*.

In John v. 14, the man whom the Priests sent down from the temple at the feast of tabernacles, to draw water from the little pool of Bethesda is called an *angel*.

Genesis xxxii. 1. Some friends of Jacob who came to tell him of the anger of Esau, are called *angels of God*. And he sends back messengers who are called *angels* in the original, and the word might have been translated so with the same propriety as in the first verse.

2. It means *a spy*. The men whom Joshua sent out to explore the land of Canaan, before the Israelites entered it, are mentioned in James ii. 25, and are called *angels*, (messengers in our version.) They were clearly *spies* in the modern military sense of the term, and are even so designated in the xi. 31, of Hebrews. See also Joshua vi. 17, 25.

Angel sometimes denotes an eminent person, one in authority, and serves as a general expression of greatness or glory.

Rom. viii. 38. 'Nor angels, nor principalities,' from the connection in which it is used, we see has reference only to civil magistrates. An angel is said to have accompanied the children of Israel in the desert ; by which Moses is meant. Acts vi. 15, when Stephen was undergoing a trial his countenance was said to appear *like an angel's*, i. e. full of serenity and composure. Colossians ii. 18, the devotion of angels—rendered in our version *the worshipping of angels*—is put for the most pure and perfect worship. This use of the word is frequent in the Old Testament, e. g. 2 Sam. xiv. 20, where 'the wisdom of angels' is spoken of; meaning the noblest wisdom, and in the same manner manna is called '*angel's food*' in Ps. lxxviii. 25.

4. *An interpreter of God's will.* St. Paul is called an *angel of God*. Galatians iv. 14. Ye received me as God's angel, i. e. God's messenger, one who brought them divine truths. Christ is said to have appeared unto *angels*, 1 Tim. iii. 16. If angel in this instance meant superhuman spirits, the passage would not accord with the context, since *this* manifestation was made before his reception to glory. It means no doubt—the disciples who both saw and conversed with Christ after his resurrection.

Revelations i. 20. The angels of the seven churches evidently mean the teachers, ministers of those churches.

Prophets, Priests, and above all the *Chief Priests*, are called angels in the Old Testament See 2 Chron.



xxxvi. 15, 16, where the Hebrew word for angel is translated *messenger*, and obviously refers to the prophets and teachers who 'at sundry times had spoken' to the people. They were called *angels*, because they were *as if sent by God*. See Malachi ii, 7, where the Prophet is expressly called *the angel of God*.

The Christian teachers, deacons, and elders, were called by the same names because the words were already familiar to the people, and because they discharged similar offices with the Prophets. Some however—as Vitringa, and Schoetgen,—think they were called angels in allusion to an ancient officer of the Jewish synagogue, who was *appointed* to the office of praying and teaching.

5. Sometimes it means *a superior order of beings of whose nature we know nothing*.

2 Peter ii. 11, allusion seems to be made to them. They are then sometimes mentioned without any qualifying word, as for instance, Matth. xiii. 41, 'The Son of man shall send forth his *angels*,' where *some* suppose celestial beings are intended. xvi. 27, 'The Son shall come, with his *angels*.' And again xxvi. 53, Jesus tells his disciples that his Father at his request will give 'him more than twelve legions of *angels*.' John xii. 29, 'The people heard a voice which they did not understand and attributed it to an *angel*;' as they ascribed incurable diseases to demons.

Sometimes they are called *angels of God*. e. g. Matth. xxii. 30, where the souls of men are represented *as the angels of God*. John i. 51, 'hereafter shall ye see \* \* \* and the *angels of God*, ascending and descending;' but this is evidently figurative language

merely. Since one of the attributes usually ascribed to angels is invisibility, and probably means 'you shall see the Son of man endowed with great powers,' as we know was the case soon after. Acts xxvii. 23, for there stood by me this night an *angel of God*,' &c. Here it evidently means that Paul received a divine communication in the night; it may have been in many other ways than by means of a person that could be seen. Math. xxviii. 2. 5, and the parallel places, we read of *angels*, who made their appearance to the disciples and 'the women.' Luke i. 11, and following verses afford another instance of the appearance. Angels ministered to Christ in the temptation, and an angel appeared 'strengthening him,' in his agony in the garden. Other passages of a similar import will occur to every reader. But whether in these instances a being was *sent down from heaven, who had* a previous existence, or an unconscious existence was made to subserve the purposes of the Most High, each one must determine for himself. The latter, however, is my opinion. I do not deny that *angels* exist in the other worlds; we *know* nothing upon this subject. We may conjecture with probability that they do; but that this doctrine is revealed in the *New Testament*, is very much to be doubted.

6. *Angel denotes the influence of God, or any manner of his manifesting himself.*

The appearance of the burning bush, which Moses saw on Mount Horeb, is ascribed to an angel, in Acts vii. 30, 35—38: In Revelations i. 1, it is said the revelation was 'signified by his angel,' not that any visible shape appeared, but that it was suggested to

his mind by God. Acts xxvii. 23, mention is made of an angel who stood by Paul in the night. We are not to suppose a celestial being came to his bedside, and made an oral communication of what he must do; but, that he was informed of his duty by a revelation which he knew was miraculous. The same may be said of the angel that appeared to Joseph. A similar use of the word occurs in 2 Kings xix. 38, where the angel of the Lord is said to have smitten the host of Sennacherib by night, that is, a sudden pestilence—in that case—had swept them away, without the appearance of any supernatural person, of which we have any knowledge. It is in this sense that 'the angel of the Lord' is said 'to encamp about' such as fear him, Ps. xxxiv. 7; and that the angels of the Lord watch over little children, Matth. xviii. 10. The 'twelve Legions of angels,' Matth. xxvi. 53, may be understood as meaning a sufficient power to repel all his assailants.

The *sense* of this word sometimes is God himself. Luke xii. 8, 9, 'Before the angels of God,' which means in the presence of God himself, as it is expressed in the parallel place, Matth. x. 32. 'Angels and men,' are sometimes taken together—to denote universality, as the heavens and the earth frequently are. 1 Cor. xiii. 1, Paul says 'though I speak with the tongues of men and angels,' i. e. though I have great power of speech, could speak in all languages. 1 Cor. iv. 9, a 'spectacle to the world, and to angels and to men,' means only to all men, and would be better rendered, 'to the world—even to angels and to men.'

7. Angel is taken in a bad as well as in a good sense.

The Powers of Evil are sometimes personified in this manner. Matth. xxv. 41 and Rev. xii. 9, mention is made of 'the *angels of the devil*;' not that we are from this to suppose such existencies as the devil and his angels, but that wickedness is personified. They seem in another place (Jude 6) to be called 'the angels who kept not their first estate.' It was the opinion of Jews in our Savior's times that there were two angels *attending* every individual, *one good*, the other evil; from the latter arose all vice, and the obstacles in the path of virtue. An allusion to this, is doubtless to be found in Matth. xviii, where Jesus speaks of the angels of little children, and in Acts xii. 18, where *Peter's angel* is spoken of, though some think it means his messenger.

These are the most important and general significations and senses in which the word *angel* is used in the New Testament. Every reader must of course determine for himself the sense the word bears in each passage he considers.

THEO. PARKER.

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#### INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EPISTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS.

This Epistle was evidently written soon after the first, since the same three apostles are joined in the salutation in both,—and three of those vigilant preachers were seldom long together.—(chap. i. 1.)

The occasion of this Epistle was the information

Paul had received of some irregularities which had stolen upon the church at Thessalonica,—and of the misconstruction that had been made of his previous Epistle.

Many of the Christians at Thessalonica he was informed had given up all secular employment, expecting that the end of all things 'should presently appear.'\* To correct an error so deep and fatal he writes the second Epistle.

After a brief introduction—common to all his Epistles—he begins to commend the faith and charity of the Thessalonians, and the patience with which they endured 'persecutions and tribulations,' which very trials he informed them were a proof that the righteous judgment of God would follow at a proper time. He points out to them the use of affliction, viz. 'That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God for which ye suffer,' (chap. i. 5.) and assures them that a day of retribution will come, 'when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.'

Chap. ii. He proceeds to rectify their mistake concerning the end of the world. He assures them 'the day of the Lord' will not appear, until a great apostacy shall prevail in the Christian Church, and the man of sin shall be revealed. He speaks of the nature of this apostacy, of its present action, and of the causes which retard its growth.

*Protestant* commentators, usually consider the Pope to be the man of sin. An opinion based upon argu-

\* See the article on the 'alleged mistake' of the apostles.



ments that cannot be shaken, while the Catholics in various ages have applied it to different individuals.

The cause which opposed the spread of the apostacy is usually thought to be the Roman Empire. The Emperors opposed Christianity, and this opposition operated as a bond of union upon the Christians, and as a preventive of the extension of Episcopal power. The Bishop of Rome could assume no temporal authority while the Emperors opposed them.

Symptoms of this apostacy had already begun to show themselves, but St. Paul expresses his thankfulness that the Thessalonians had escaped the contagion, and exhorts them to 'stand fast.'

Chap. iii. He requests their prayers for himself and his two assistants, that their labors may be successful and the word of God 'may have free course;' at the same time he expresses his confidence in their steadfastness.

He then reproves some irregularities, and offers his own conduct while he was among them as an example of an industrious and orderly life. If one walked disorderly they were not to be intimate with him. Yet even he was not to be counted as any enemy, but admonished as a brother. He writes the salutation with his own hand, that spurious Epistles may not be palmed upon them, as had been done before, as it appears from chap. ii. 2.

Though this is the shortest of Paul's Epistles to a church, it is an important one. The use of affliction, and certainty of judgment are pointed out, and the apostacy which so long darkened the face of Christianity is clearly predicted.

THEO. PARKER.

## THE SONG OF DEBORAH AND BARAK.

(Translated from the German of John Gottfried Von Herder.)

We now come to a poetical piece of a different kind, to the triumph-song of Deborah. Here is poetry and song. That which sounded forth in the song of Moses and Miriam at the Red Sea, now sounds out in alternate chorus, and approaches—I might almost say—in imitative dance. It is the oldest Pindaric ode in the world, and if Brown's hypothesis—that originally, poetry, music, dancing, and legislation were united,—were as well supported in all the examples he produces, as in this, it would then be what now it is not, the truest hypothesis. This excellent, but difficult song, has found a series of good critics, and I would attempt to make you attentive to the poetical character of the song, to its note of triumph and of jubilee. That you may read the history first, I will place it before you.

Then sang Deborah,  
And Barak, Abinoam's Son.  
On that day thus they sang ;  
How Israel's Leader led !  
And willingly the People followed,  
Praise ye the Lord !

How beautifully this song begins! Israel is a Republic, to which Deborah has nothing to order. Thanks to the Leader of the host and his followers come first.

Listen, ye Kings!  
Attend, ye Princes!  
I to the Eternal,

To the Eternal, will I sing and play,  
To the God of Israel!

The previous declaration is only an introduction of the thanks to an higher Being who had succored Israel.

Eternal, when thou wentest out  
From Seir,  
When thou returnedst  
Through Edom :  
Then quaked the Earth,  
The heavens dropped  
The clouds poured out,  
Mountain's sundered before Jehovah's face:  
Sinai before the face of Jehovah,  
The God of Israel!

The praise begins from those times, from which subsequently the most beautiful songs of victory begin, from the journey of Israel through the wilderness, from the giving of the Law, and from the first, most splendid, most wonderful victory. Moses himself has given the tone to this.\* The song itself will tell in what was the actual beginning of this battle.

In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath,  
In the days of Jael, the ways lay desolate,  
The wayfarers went in crooked paths.

The assemblies of Israel ceased !  
They ceased until I arose ; Deborah.  
Until I arose, the mother of Israel.

The land was insecure, the streets desolate: who-

\* Deut. xxxiii. 2.

ever ventured from his house, sought a by-way. The assembling of the public council, the government of the state remained unattempted. The guardians of the land did not come together, much less did they attempt the public delivery, or even a deliberation. Then she ventured, a woman, and arose. She arose from her own impulse, to be the mother of Israel in design and deed.

They have chosen strange Gods :  
 There was war before the gates,  
 No shield was seen, nor spear,  
 Among the forty thousand of Israel.

The first line contains the cause of the disaster, the second and following the sad disaster itself.

Every where war! No one ventured from the door of his house; all around assaults, no where defence. No man drew his sword, and doubtless the number of spears and swords was very small in Israel, as it appears immediately before this history.\* It cost Deborah much trouble to persuade Barak alone to venture with her, and yet the more she now breaks forth in thanks and praise for the assistance lent.

My heart is moved to the commanders of Israel,  
 And to you, the willing among the people:  
 Praise ye the Eternal.

Ye riders upon white asses,  
 Ye that sit on costly cushions,  
 Ye wanderers of the streets, prepare the song.

\* Chap. iii. 31.

We see the condition of the republic in both states: the commanders who led, the people who followed; Deborah thanks them both. The *riders upon white asses*, and such as sat upon *embroidered cushions* when they rode, i. e. men of distinction, the rich,—and those who must travel on foot, are to recollect the former insecurity, and the present time of quiet, and with her to raise a song.

A song for the voice of the swains, who among the wells  
Draw water for the herds.  
There then shall they praise the deeds of Jehovah,  
His deeds shall the swains of Israel praise,  
Then the people of Jehovah shall go singing to the gate.

An introduction to the battle-song, which is next to follow. The theatre of the victory is to be the scene of the song, and the voice of the people who have won the victory is also to preserve the remembrance of it. The battle was fought at Tabor, between the brooks *Kishon*. The storm of rain, and the swell of the streams had contributed to the victory; and here also the pomp of this day is hereafter to live. You know, that among a nation of herdsmen, particularly in the warm East—brooks and wells are the common places of assembly, where lulling songs are sung, and old achievements are praised. And of what, in this land of fountains, could they sing more worthily or fittingly, than of that very act, which took place here, which was accomplished by the country-people, by whom the whole land was delivered, and of whom the murmuring springs almost replied:



Awake, awake! oh Deborah!  
Awake, awake! prepare the song!  
Arise, Barak,  
Bring forth thy captives, son of Abinoam!

This awakening is entirely peculiar to the lyric song. How often Pindar arouses 'his own heart.' How often David calls up his heart and soul, when they prepare for the loftiest poetic flight. Thus Deborah excites herself when she begins that peculiar description of the fight, and as it were, attempts to fight the good battle yet once more. So she arouses Barak, that he should arise, and bring out his captives, that is, should hold triumph in her song. It is a well known fact, that this was done among the ancients, that the booty was brought out on such a day of joy and song, and the captives were exhibited in mockery, while many people dancing and singing, imitated with their gestures, the exploits and the most illustrious achievements of the war. Let us now see what was done, and how it was effected.

A small remnant went out against heroes,  
Jehovah's people went with me against the strong,  
Out of Ephraim came their root, the dwellers of Amalek.  
Thou camest with him, Benjamin, thou with thy people!  
Out of Machir came the war leaders,  
Out of Zebulun, they who bore the muster-rod.  
The Princes of Issachar were with Deborah,  
Issachar, the defence of Barak,  
Sprang with him down into the valley.  
Only among the brooks of Reuben there was much counselling.  
Why, Reuben, didst thou sit among thy folds?  
To hear the bleating of thy herds?

Ab, at Reuben's brooks there is much counselling!  
Gilead also,—he staid beyond Jordan,  
And Dan,—why should he stay among his ships?  
Asser sits still on the shores of the sea,  
In his havens he dwells secure.  
But Zebulon perils his life to the death,  
And Naphtali appears on the tops of the hill.

This is a picture of war, how excellent, how republican! They who came to fight are praised, and those who remained behind are put to shame. If the cowards could not be punished, they were exposed in the song of victory. The prelude to this description is common; some relics of an oppressed people draw up against the mighty. The gathering-cry has been uplifted by Deborah herself. The tribes are named as they followed her. She was an Ephraimitess, and Ephraim had the honor of the first rank. She dwelt upon the mountains, the *root of the army* and of the whole description is from the same place. Without doubt the region of the mountain, where she lived, or from which her first assistance came, was called Amalek. After Ephraim follow Benjamin, Manasseh, and Zebulon, who is once more mentioned with Naphtali. The tribes seem to have been assembled as she summoned them, as they lay in the same order in her route.

The march began from Ephraim. The Benjamites, whose territory lay behind it, followed. The march led through Manasseh and Issachar. Zebulon joined them, in which was the district of Tabor. Now they were on the field. Reuben did not come; he reposed, as the scornful song declares, among the brooks of his meadow, and listened to the bleating of his sheep. In

noble thoughts and reflection he cannot sympathise. The ancient and modern writers of yet uncivilized nations, show that it was an universal custom of the ancient people at their festivals of victory, to punish with shame the cowards and loiterers. Reuben could not be drawn more disgracefully than in his politic wisdom among his streams, and the bleating music of his flock, which he could not give up. They were as secure beyond the Jordan, as Dan, who dwelt near the sea, where at all events he could be protected by his ships. So Asher also remained on his coasts and havens. 'The Canaanites can never come by ships, we cannot help you.'

But Zebulon and Naphtali are there, and they receive the fairest prize. The former, probably, suffered the most from the enemy, since this country was the scene of war; the latter, their allies, were brave citizens. The lot was now changed between Issachar and Reuben. In Jacob's blessing, the *former* lay among the brooks, now the latter does this, and the former, the ass,\* springs with Barak on light feet down the valley. Now we know the people, we hasten to see the fight. The enemy are so much superior to them, who can, who will help them?

The Kings came and fought,  
The Kings of Canaan fought,  
At Tanach, by the waters of Megiddo,  
They stayed not their desire of silver.

This is one army, and the other is thus described.

\*'Issachar is a strong ass crouching down between two burdens.' Gen. xlix. 14.

The stars fought from Heaven,  
From their courses they fought with Sisera,  
The streamlets of Kison swept them away,  
The crooked streams of Kison—

Advance with fury, oh my soul.

Then trampled stumbling the hoofs of steeds,

They turned—they turned back—the steeds of the brave—

Turned back indeed, they could not fly swift enough! How strong and natural is the description of this victory. Their own power did not achieve it, but the place, the season, and divine aid. There were many, Kings after Kings, the powerful, already certain of victory and plunder, they thirsted for the spoil, but this time they did not find it. Heaven was in array against them:—The ranks of battle, the courses of the stars—God himself led out his heavenly host.

And how did they fight! How was it effected! What follows explains this. The brooks swelled, the streams poured down from the mountains into the narrow valley, and drove back and washed away both horse and man. A sudden inundation also, was the cause of the victory, and this came from Heaven. Among all the ancient nations, it was ascribed to 'water bringing stars,' it came from the God of the Heavens and the stars.

Perhaps Deborah had relied upon this place, upon the storm and the inundation, when she summoned Barak, and drew out so far to the north to await the enemy; but it was the God of Israel, who had favored her design above all her expectations. Unusual torrents fell in; the horses stumbled, and the baggage wagons,—of which Israel had none—injured their owners themselves. In the mid tumult of defeat, De-

borah cries out, advance my soul with power, as if she saw a corpse lying before her. Now we see why the song opened with a description of God's appearance with dropping waters, and bursting clouds. The lightning—with which God in the wilderness broke out from the mountain, and led on the army—is now changed into pouring rain.

Curse ye Meroz, says Jehovah's command,  
Imprecate curses upon its inhabitants,  
They came not to the help of Jehovah,  
To Jehovah's help in his brave host.  
Be Jael blessed among women,  
The wife of Heber the Kenite,  
Among the women of the tents be blessed.  
He asked for water, she gave him milk,  
In a splendid cup she brought intoxicating milk,  
And her hands seized upon the nail,  
Her right hand upon the heavy mallet,  
And she smote Sisera. She smote through his head.  
She bruised him. She smote through his temples.  
He lay bowed at her feet,  
He sunk at her feet, and died,  
He bowed himself, and fell down—  
Bowed down he fell, and—was no more.

How picture-like and real this description is, it speaks for itself. This exploit of Jael is praised, not in a moral discourse, but in a song of victory; as a patriotic act, as the delivery of Israel from the hand of the enemy. A curse was pronounced upon Meroz, because he came not to the help of Israel; and on the other hand Deborah praises Jael, the deliverer of Israel, as a woman of women. Instead of coolness, she gave an intoxicating drink: she used the nail and ham-



mer, instead of a sword. A woman fell personally upon the Hero, as a woman's courage, with a few forces, had defeated his brave army. This is the point to which Deborah brings the song of praise. The army is in flight, but how goes it at home? How is the conqueror Sisera expected?

The mother of Sisera looked through the window and cried,  
Through the lattice-window she wept out,  
'Why does his chariot delay to come,  
Why tarries the tramp of his steeds?'

A deep glance into the mother's heart; she is the first who suspects misfortune.

Her wise women answered her,  
She even returned answer to herself,  
'What! shall they not find plunder, and divide it?  
A maiden, two maidens for each man.  
Many colored robes for Sisera,  
Many colored robes, and gold embroidery,  
Variegated and double wrought neck bands,  
All plunder for Sisera.'

The mockery is bitter: and still more so in the mouth of Deborah. The enemy came to rob, and thus they were mocked because they found so little. Deborah herself might have been taken. The maidens, and the costly garments were to be sold into the hands of the enemy: for this they were rejoicing, and had already distributed the spoil among themselves and their wives, who, certain of their husbands' victory, themselves explained this delay, and so Deborah weaves in the speech of the companions of the Princess. Since she can so soon hope and so soon realize

her hopes, hopes too, which—as the conclusion shows—sound so disgraceful.

So perish all thine enemies, Jehovah.

But they who love him, be like the set of the sun,

In the strength of his youth.

Where can you find a song, which equals this, among such a people, in such an age, so heroic, so minute, so full of activity, and from feature to feature, so feminine in the description of fear, of distress, of victory, of thanks, of mockery? THEO. PARKER.

#### EXPOSITION OF 1 PETER III. 17—20.

[The Editors of the Scriptural Interpreter received a note, some time ago, requesting an explanation of the above passage, which would have been complied with in our last had not other articles prevented the insertion of this.]

The passage in the common version reads thus. 'For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, which sometime were disobedient,' &c. 1 Peter iii. 17—20.

The whole difficulty rests upon the alleged fact that Jesus, after his crucifixion, went to the 'spirits in prison,' that is to the dead, and preached unto them. This subject has exercised the ingenuity of all the crit-

ics, whose various opinions may easily be seen in Wolf's *Cura Philologica* and Bloomfield.

A translation of the passage may perhaps remove the difficulties, we should however remember the object which the apostle was aiming at in the Epistle and chapter of which this is a part. He had just been recommending certain duties, to which he attempts to persuade his friends by assuring them, that they shall receive a reward for their labor, which he confirms by a quotation from the Psalms, descriptive of the Almighty's care for the righteous. He then goes on to show, that if they do *not* receive the external reward of their labors, but on the contrary 'suffer for righteousness sake,' they are still happy, assuring them that if it be God's will that they suffer, it is better to suffer while doing well, than doing ill.

The whole passage may be thus translated.

(17) For if it be God's will, it is better to suffer, doing good than doing evil, (18) for, even Christ once suffered for sinners, the just for the unjust, that he might lead us in to God, being put to death as to the body, but alive, as to the spirit, even being gone—as he had announced—(19) to the spirits in prison, (20) who had formerly disobeyed, when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was getting ready, &c.

Remarks upon several passages in the above.

18. *For sinners.* Here the abstract, in the original, is put for the concrete, *sins* for *sinners*. The word rendered *sins* in the common version is in the plural, and is not the common term rendered *sin* in the N. T.

*Might lead us in to God.* To draw nigh to God, in

the Scriptures means to worship him. So to *lead one to God*, is to bring him to worship his Creator. The example of Christ at his death, is no unfrequent instrument in bringing men to Christianity.

*Dead as to the body, but alive as to the soul.* Body and soul are often used in opposition to each other, in the Scriptures as well as among us at the present day. The *body*, or the *flesh* stands for the mortal, the *soul* for the immortal part of our nature.

*Alive.* This word sometimes means, *restored, revived, &c.*, but the sense assigned is a common one.—*Rosenmueller.*

*Gone—as he had announced.* The words rendered 'by which,' in the common version, have the signification assigned them above, in many places in the New Testament. e. g. in the 16 verse of this chapter. 2 chap. 12. Rom. vii. 6. viii. 3, 15. The word has the same force in classic Greek.

*Had announced, had foretold,* while he was yet with them, he had predicted his death. e. g. Matt. xvi. 21, xvii. 23. &c.

*Spirits in Prison.* All who had previously died. It was a common opinion among the Jews at the time of Peter that the souls of men did not go to judgment immediately after death, but remained together in a certain place, till the end of all things. This place was the region of the dead and was commonly called Sheol. The term *prison* is well applied to it, since the souls of men were supposed to be *confined* there. This place is called a prison in Revelations xx. 7. The souls of the dead are called *spirits* in Heb. xii. 23, and other places.

*Who formerly disobeyed &c.* The cotemporaries of Noah seem to be selected, to give greater force by a particular example than by a general remark, and because the Jews supposed them to be eminently wicked.

*While the ark was getting ready.* That is, God gave them 120 years to repent, for Noah was so long building the ark. The rest of the passage presents no difficulty.

It may perhaps be urged that the above translation is *harsh*, but it is the only one which appears to me consistent with the text and the tenor of Scripture, and is here given that if wrong its errors may be pointed out, and corrected 'by wiser pens.'

THEO. PARKER.

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#### THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS.

(Translated from the German of Dr. Christopher Friedrich Ammon.)

Immediately after his baptism, Jesus repaired to the wilderness to meditate thoroughly upon the plan of a religious reformation which he had resolved upon. The three first evangelists describe this state of mind as a personal interview of Jesus, with the evil spirit, who by a very alluring temptation, put his wisdom and love for religion to the test. Little can it be doubted that this is the literal sense of the evangelical account of this circumstance, and as readily will



the inquirer into it receive the return to the private and public history of Jesus, only as a contribution to an acquaintance with the opinions of this age upon the political power of 'evil spirits,' and with the gradual moral education of Jesus—who from the beginning of his call to teach, looked upon the popular expectation of a Messiah from its true point of view,—the account of his temptation will ever remain important to readers of all classes.

(Math. iv. 1—12.) This wonderful history is also related by Mark, (i. 12—14,) and Luke (iv. 1—13.) The first compresses the whole account into a few words, and adds, he was 'with the wild beasts,' to express the fearfulness and peril of the condition of Jesus.\* Luke, on the contrary points out several additional features of the wonderful. As, e.g. the tempter shows Jesus the Provinces of Asia, in a 'moment of time,' in a twinkling, and speaks magniloquently about his supremacy over the Asiatic provinces, because, '*it is delivered unto me, and to whom I will, I give it.*'†

Matthew represents the tempter as departing *finally*. Luke on the other hand, as only for a *season*.

It is easy to conceive how the interpreters of these chapters should be divided into several parties, by reason of this disagreement of the Evangelists.

Some believed in a personal conversation of Jesus with Satan. Euthymius of Zigabenus says upon this passage, 'The unspeakable incarnation of Jesus deceived the devil, who supposed, that being a man, he had been adopted by God, on account of his excellent

\* See II Kings, ii. 24.

† Luke, iv. 6.

qualities, an honor which the devil envied him, as he had envied the *old Adam*.' On the side of grammatical explanation, but little can be urged against this view, viz. that Matthew speaks openly of an actual dialogue between Jesus and Satan. But the Jewish popular notions of the *satan*, the governor of this world, are so striking throughout this whole chapter, that the thinking reader can scarcely remain satisfied with an interpretation merely literal. It has recently been attempted to show that the *devil* meant a Jewish priest, or a deputy of the Pharisees, who had received a charge from the Sanhedrim to win Jesus over to the Pharisees, and in that case, to offer him their protection.\*

But Jesus at this time had not proceeded to exercise his office of Messiah. The word Devil is, certainly, used allegorically, and in a dialogue, in Matth. xvi. 23, but it is never applied to men in an historical sense. And beside, the second temptation in the mouth of a deputy of the Sanhedrim would be without force or object.

A third interpretation is more praiseworthy, which considers it as an *inward* temptation, whether it is regarded as a vision,—so Hewmann, Becker, Bolton consider,—or—as Eichhorn, Herder and some others suppose,—as an inward struggle of the desires. In order to do no violence to the grammatical sense, it is necessary to separate the conjectural truth of this affair from the relation and its origin. The fact itself,

\* See the so-called 'Natural History of the great Prophet of Nazareth.' (Bethlehem 1800).

according to all probability, would appear to a sound critic, to be this.

After his baptism, Jesus—full of the thoughts of his call as a religious teacher, and the Messiah—went into the wilderness, where he subsisted upon vegetable food. When hunger disturbed him in his meditations, the thought occurred, whether God had not lent him miraculous power to change the stones into food, if he were God's messenger. This temptation called forth the better thought, that the want of food was only a small evil, in comparison with the benefit of the truth, for which he was indebted to the divine instructions. When Jesus, at another time, perceived his authority was not great enough to fix the attention of the people, the thought arose in him, whether God would not miraculously protect him, if he should throw himself down from the height, to be wondered at by the spectators, and greeted as the Messiah. Reason soon answered: God will not remove the laws of nature to gratify thy ambition. Finally, upon the summit of a mountain, whence he overlooked all the provinces of the Jewish state at a single glance, it occurred to him, whether he could not place himself at the head of the people, dethrone Herod Antipas and Philip, and drive the Romans out of the land. After maturer thought he rejected this enticement of ambition as a subjection to the Princes of this world, and as practical idolatry. He then made a firm resolution to remain independent of political schemes, and to devote himself entirely to the advancement of a pure religion, and so then composure and contentment came back to his soul.

From this struggle of Jesus with himself, the account of a personal temptation of Jesus by Satan, might afterwards easily arise. The Jews commonly believed that all bad desires, and particularly ambition, and desire of power, came from Satan. They called the voice of reason the good angel, who dwelt in the right chamber of the heart, or, had his place on the right side of men. On the contrary they called the will of the flesh the bad angel, the Devil, who dwelt in the left chamber of the heart, or stood on the left hand of men.\*

According to this manner of regarding man, as under the influence of two opposite powers, there was nothing more natural than to consider the enticement of desire—from which even Jesus was not free,†—as an enticement, as a call of Satan; and, on the other hand, to regard the triumph of reason as a return of the good spirit.

THEO. PARKER.

\* It is said in the Book Sohar, 'There are two chambers in the human heart, one full of blood, the other of spirit. Bad desires, or bad spirits, occupy the bloody chambers.'—Sohar, Sulzbach's edition, fol. 1634.

† Rom. viii. 3.

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS UPON HEBREW LITERATURE.

(Translated from Eichhorn's Introduction to the Old Testament.)

## CHAP. I. § 1.

If only that people can be original and possess an original literature, which has raised itself by degrees from the lowest steps of intellectual culture through its own power, has invented for itself its laws and religion, and has never interrupted the gradual progress of its knowledge by borrowing foreign science, arts and inventions, then the Hebrews cannot be called an original people, nor have an original literature. For to owe it all to themselves they must have lived from the commencement of their civilization shut up in their own closely encompassed territory, and separated from the influence of all other nations. Now from their first origin when they first existed as a moderate sized family, they wandered about as a nomadic tribe among various races, adopted their manners, ideas and opinions, and were subject to their sometimes stronger, sometimes weaker influence. Afterwards this family increases in Egypt to a people, and if already as a pastoral people, which was ignoble according to the national ideas of the Egyptians, they were not in the closest intimacy with them, they yet came in contact with them in so many ways, that Egyptian opinions, views and practices must have been current among them. How else could the free born Hebrews in their wandering from Egypt as a simple pastoral people be in possession of so many arts and inventions wholly foreign, which they nevertheless practised in Arabia in the building and decoration of their sacred tabernacle? How could they have worked in silver and gold, engraved in precious stones, and shown so many other artificial proficien-



cies, which always imply a long practice? How could they in the Arabian wilderness on the first occasion have adopted the worship of animals, if they had not carried a love for it with them from Egypt? And even suppose that a four hundred and thirty years residence there had given to the pastoral people no Egyptian stamp in all those opinions or practices in which it was susceptible of it, yet Moses interrupted the progress of its political and intellectual education, and carried through them the improvement and knowledge of an Egyptian scholar by his contrivances and laws, and thus caused a certain Egyptian spirit to unite with the Hebrew, which was of lasting influence upon Jewish literature as far as we have the means of testing it.

But what people ever occupied so high an original station as we have now supposed? Or what nation, not merely of modern, but even of the most ancient times, could boast that it became such of itself alone; that its manners and religion had always remained free from foreign influence, and that its genius was never fostered nor enlarged by wandering ideas? It is enough to constitute originality, if a people does not slavishly imitate, but unites in a reasonable proportion all borrowed and foreign opinions with its own, and has so merged itself in them that after its union they together constitute an homogeneous whole: or even if it provides a new form for what is foreign, and thereby transforms it to its own: or if it has stamped upon its mode of thinking, its manners and intellectual developement, an individual and marked character, and has retained it with an unalterable constancy. And in this sense, the Hebrews in their manners and laws, in their religious and political constitution, and

in their whole literature as far as we know it, were to the highest degree an original people. The plan which Moses gave them they retained until the Babylonian captivity; they had nearly become that of which their lawgiver could sketch the form; nor had they from this time at least, transgressed his purposes, his hopes and his intentions, and with all their spirit of obstinacy and wilfulness, of stubbornness and pride, they had still retained a kind of originality. Moses wished to elevate his nation from its first childhood, by political and religious cultivation, and there ever remained on its spirit and literature the impression which he had fixed. For the preservation of all higher knowledge he instituted the order of priests: it continued in their possession, and up to the end of the Jewish state cultivation and improvement were never very extensive or common. Like all nations in the lower degree of cultivation, the Hebrews merely sung and composed poetry: their language remained even to the end of their state as the poet would have wished it, rich in images and undefined. In proof of this, in every expression of regular prose, which is indispensable for the delivery of higher knowledge and peculiar wisdom, their language first began to decline at the end of their state—a time when the nation itself by poverty and enervation and the impositions of its insolent victors was deeply sunken, and its inward energy was so broken and pressed down, that henceforward even its poetry failed in that strength and elevation which so high and bold a genius formerly animated, and when it was too late for the nation to open for itself a new path. Their political wisdom was seldom equal to that of Moses, much less did they ever rise above it. Their philosophy consisted, as with children

and youthful nations, in the lessons of experience, moral sayings and proverbs. Even their learned order of priests stood but a small degree higher in improvement than the nation, and never advanced, even with all the superiority in which Moses had placed them, to the culture of the sciences. Its language was never more organized and defined than Moses had already written it. Its historical books in the selection and narration of occurrences always had reference to the confined and partial circle of the history of the order itself, which it regarded as the centre of the land and of the nation. It related every thing with reference to itself, to religious customs, festivals and sacrifices, without a comprehensive glance at the whole, and without regard to every event of national interest. And (if we may presume to draw a conclusion from our still extant scanty extracts for the spirit of the more ancient annals, which appears to have been abundant in the first) the Hebrew historians never advanced farther in the historic art, than had the Greeks already a long time before Herodotus.

Whoever would ask or expect a various and multiform literature, or a really effectual erudition from a nation confined so closely to its uncultivated condition, and with its intellectual state so little altered, must be unaware, in his want of acquaintance with other refined and rude people, of what the human mind in its various states and conditions is capable, and advances claims in which history will not justify him. In nearly all points the Hebrews have remained behind the hopes and wishes of their Lawgiver; should they have exceeded them here?

For a various and multiform literature, and for the future introduction of real erudition, Moses had not

labored. Nor could he have well done so if he would not otherwise injure his nation by neglecting a regard to their existing condition. For first of all, he must induce the still rude race by new contrivances to the difficult step of changing their restless pastoral life for a settled, agricultural one. As for the rest, he left it to time and to favorable accidents, whether it should ever after break the bond of the strong and firmly bound and intricate civil alliance by which he sought to keep it politically together, to cast by the order of priests established by his contrivance, and by the freedom of all kinds of inventions and knowledge, take the second great step to the glory of a nation rich in the arts and sciences. If Egypt with its sacred order had not been the principal pattern which Moses copied in his legislation, he would still have been compelled to institute it by the necessity of his time. In their infancy all nations both of the old and the new world, had need of a guardian, who might preserve their already acquired inventions and the higher knowledge already obtained, as the first foundation of their future science and distinguishing wisdom. So long as a people is still in its infancy, that is, so long as it possesses only single inventions and a small number of the higher sciences, and the great mass of the people is still too rude and barbarous to be susceptible of more than common ideas and capable of preserving some more advanced attainments, which only learned men can give, so long some few were in a condition to acquire easily the whole stock of the sciences, and the condition of the populace still admitted no superfluity of the men which it would need for the care of the arts and sciences; so long the state of the world and of humanity demanded the selection of some

of the best to whose protection all acquired knowledge might be confided, to descend in their families.

Therefore not so much at first the prudence and comprehensive aim of the wisest men of a nation or of a lawgiver has as usual established it, but much more, the necessity of the times, that beneficent provider for the welfare of humanity in its most varied conditions, has of itself most always imposed it upon the most different nations which could by no means have copied each other. If provision were not made for the preservation of acquired knowledge by a distinct order, then it would soon be forgotten, and the power of God by which wise men and great discoverers were furnished, for the good of following generations, would in fact be lost upon the world, and then in this respect, neglected nations must ever remain children. Still there should be a learned order for the preservation of art and science only during the time of the first dawning of civilization: this period only being once passed, it was then extremely prejudicial, it retarded the progress of knowledge, and prevented the extension of the general improvement over the whole nation.

It certainly was not one of the least causes of Grecian improvement, and of the consequent beauty and grandeur of the Grecian genius, that the beginning of its culture took place at the time of an already well advanced humanity, when such an order was soon unnecessary. With the Hebrews on the contrary, all knowledge remained as the peculiar possession of the priests after the time when Moses established the institution, in which no layman was initiated, and before they had arrived to that strength and maturity of genius that they could abolish such an exclusive possession of the priests, and could generally take a part in



the learning of Moses, they had already ceased to be an independent people.

And so long as the law which forbade them all intercourse with foreign nations was valid, so long the intelligence of the Hebrews, even in the most favorable circumstances, could not exceed a very moderate elevation. Thus all foreign inventions were lost to them, their ideas were never enlarged by foreign knowledge, and their intelligence was not widened. On the contrary, a certain pride got possession of them, as of all other isolated nations of ancient and modern times, which regarded its own land and nation as the first and most important in the earth, and by a poor contempt deprived itself of every thing foreign. Thus bereft of a supply of new knowledge from without, and within strictly confined in their improvement by the priests, the great mass of the people from the earliest eras remained in their childish ideas. So entirely did the culture of Moses act only upon a part of the priests, and upon some few distinguished men besides them who had elevated themselves above their contemporaries and the mass by the extraordinary vigor of their genius. Even the great idea of a single invisible Being, as the Creator and Governor of the world, the highest possession of the Hebrews, and one which the wise men of Greece and Rome might have envied, was merely a part of the wisdom of the Israelitish lawgiver; not of the whole people, for whom (as the history tells us) such an idea, even down to the time of the Babylonian captivity was far too spiritual and elevated. Already in the desert of Arabia they had bowed to the worship of animals which they had learnt from the Egyptians, and even to polytheism in the land of the Canaanites, from which at times they could

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be restrained only by force, and to which they always returned as soon as this force was relaxed, and only some exalted souls perceived the impropriety of this for thinking beings. But after the people had become cultivated by the influence of foreign nations in its exile, their understanding was so enlarged and improved by higher ideas and opinions that they kept this lofty tenet perfect and did not again desert it by the force of any example or pretence.

And what perhaps might have ensued notwithstanding all these disadvantageous influences upon improvement and literature, would be opposed by the condition and fate of the Hebrews. While they wandered as shepherds over the free pastures of the East, they were only qualified for the preservation of their traditions and their shepherd songs. Under the forming hand of Moses they had indeed become accustomed to many things which must precede their first cultivation, but soon after these experiences in the times of the incursions and alliances under the Judges, they again fell back. The free, wild, war and battle-songs might in such circumstances increase in power and in strength, but the spirit of the nation was certainly impaired again in cultivation and acuteness, in so far as we may presume to attribute them to a people in such circumstances. The Hebrews had so entirely lost the skill in mechanical arts which they had taken with them from Egypt, that Solomon was soon after obliged to call foreign workmen into the land to construct his Temple and other works of art. After long poverty they at last attained a good condition, and he likewise showed to the Hebrews his royal results by the quick elevation of the arts which cannot flourish without prosperity. David had much enriched

his treasury with the taxes of several states conquered by him, which he had neglected to plunder according to the old rude rights of war. It was shortly after increased with new wealth by the flourishing commerce upon the Red Sea, and Solomon came to the peaceful possession of the riches which he inherited from his father. Under his reign all the arts of luxury quickly appeared among the Hebrews, in proof that a nation may become every thing when it is not bound to a certain condition. Now works of art were built under his encouragement and by the aid of his riches, a temple and palaces were erected, and the chief city was embellished with a taste which could only have been expected from the refinement of Greece. But with his reign this splendor of the kingdom suddenly ceased together with the excellence of all the arts which could not exist without wealth. Yet before the expiration of the reign of Solomon were the public treasuries exhausted, which, except only the very small property of individual citizens, was consumed by the participation in royal luxury, and afterwards by royal extortions. Thus the whole state was enfeebled in all its relations. Through the consequent division of the empire and the constant destructive wars within and without, both states sank into the deepest poverty, and through the want of all new resources, into the most extreme political enervation which shattered the spirit of the nation. Thus after Solomon, internal dissensions and wars with powerful neighbors, completed the impossibility of again restoring itself. The history indeed furnishes an example, that in great and powerful States, even the most destructive wars cannot wholly overthrow once established knowledge, nor entirely destroy the arts and sciences already existing.



in perfection, but that as it regards a people still weak in intellect and political solidity they kill the first and not yet developed germ.

§ 2.

*The Importance of Hebrew Literature.*

All this is not said to the disadvantage of the memorials which we have still remaining of the Hebrews. He who would despise them because they are descended from a nation which attained no high degree of eminence, and had exercised their intellectual abilities only very partially, must be either ungrateful to the most important service, or so unjust as to demand of the first faint glimmering of day, the full light of noon.

\* \* \* \* \*

The greater part of these memorials possess another high value from their extreme antiquity. Most of them are from times of which besides them there are no other lines extant. The oldest historian of the Hebrews, is several centuries older than the first acquaintance of the Greeks with the art of writing, and their latest historian is nearly contemporary with Herodotus, the father of Grecian history. Besides, the Hebrew historical and poetical books, as very old intellectual works of Asia, are the most valuable records for the history of human progress, because, by tradition and other sources, the human race originated upon the soil of Asia, and has from thence slowly elevated itself. They contain not merely a history of the Hebrews, and a picture of their culture and advancement, but, through their collection of traditions from the old world, have contributions likewise for the history of the whole human race. Where else would have been the books which might have preserved to us

such pure traditions of the primitive condition of humanity when lost in the mist of time? Or where the records which deliver an equally fine philosophy of the origin of the universe? or in general,—would supply the place of the Hebrew volume in the history of humanity? How much poorer would our histories of states and people, still sufficiently deficient, be in important and trustworthy narrations of old times, without the written remains of the Hebrews? \* \* \*

Thus instead of ridiculing and despising, we will rather thank fortune for these still existing flowers of oriental genius, and will therein mourn that time which is gently dealing with so much literary rubbish, has devoured so much of the most important treasures of literature, to which certainly the Hebrew records belong; and on the other hand we wonder anew that even so much as we now possess, has escaped her devouring teeth. The Egyptians and Chaldeans, the Phœnicians and Hebrews, the four oldest civilized people, for a long time played near each other remarkable characters upon the theatre of humanity, and left behind to their posterity, many written memorials of their civilization and glory. None among them all has been obliged to pass through a circle of greater and all destroying alterations than the Hebrew; they were torn from their own residence by their proud conquerors, according to the old savage customs, and planted in another land, and here, dispersed among foreign races, they for a long time ceased to be an individual people. Yet the former have entirely vanished—as to their names,—but this has survived its state, and though scattered over the whole world, is still to be recognised after the space of thousands of years. Of

the former, either all the memorials of their literature are to the last fragment entirely lost, or they have still only a mournful ruin, so small, as in no degree to diminish the loss of the remainder. Of the Hebrews, on the contrary, there is even now extant a whole volume of the greatest value, and so ancient in its authorship, that even the writings of the Greeks, when compared with them, sink to the freshest youth. As among the Hebrews, so in Egypt, Phœnicia and Babylon, all the higher sciences, and important writings were committed to the care of the priests for preservation, and the whole of the literature, in all these three states, followed the fate of the priests and temples.\* As soon as their order of priests was abolished, so did it at once likewise happen with all their inherited knowledge, and the fruits of their industry, and the experience of many centuries: as soon as their temples were destroyed, at once likewise all the works of literature were buried beneath their ruins. The preservation of so many and so important fragments of Hebrew literature amidst the equal, and in part, the far more destructive fortunes, which have befallen these people, appears throughout a wonder of the time: how can it be explained on natural grounds? GEO. E. ELLIS.

\* Meiner in his history of the origin, progress, and decline of the sciences in Greece and Rome, Part I, page 53, has collected a fine number of examples of this kind from the ancient history of Greece.

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NOTE.—The "Translation and Exposition" in this number should have been signed GEO. E. ELLIS.

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